

LONGMEN'S  
STONE BUDDHAS  
AND CULTURAL  
HERITAGE

WHEN ANTIQUITY MET MODERNITY IN CHINA



DONG WANG

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## Longmen's Stone Buddhas and Cultural Heritage

When Antiquity Met Modernity in China

by Dong Wang

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### About the Book

This thoroughly researched book provides the first comprehensive history of how a UNESCO World Heritage site on the Central China Plain, Longmen's caves and the Buddhist statuary of Luoyang, was rediscovered in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Drawing on original research and archival sources in Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, and Swedish, as well as extensive fieldwork, Dong Wang traces the ties between cultural heritage and modernity, detailing how this historical monument has been understood from antiquity to the present. She highlights the manifold traffic and expanded contact between China and other countries as these nations were reorienting themselves in order to adapt their own cultural traditions to newly industrialized and industrializing societies. Unknown to much of the world, Longmen and its mesmerizing modern history takes readers to the heartland of China, known as "Chinese Babylon" a century ago. With remarkable depth and breadth, this book unravels both a bygone and a continuing human pursuit of artefacts—shared, spiritual, modern, and above all beautiful that have linked so many lives, Chinese and foreign.

### About the Author

**Dong Wang** is distinguished university professor of history and founding executive director of the new Wellington Koo Institute for Modern China in World History at Shanghai University, as well as research associate at the Fairbank Center of Harvard University. Her books include *The United States and China: A History from the Eighteenth Century to the Present*.

### Praise for the Book

"The famous Buddhist sculptures at the World Heritage site at Longmen are among China's most important historical and artistic monuments. In this fascinating book, Dong Wang presents a path-breaking analysis of the ways Chinese and foreigners have understood the sculptures throughout the twentieth century, and how cultural heritage shaped views of modernity in China and elsewhere. In stressing universal spiritual values rather than nationalistic politics, the book makes an important and original contribution to our understanding of Sino-foreign cultural relations, at the same time casting new light on the modern history of Chinese art and religion and on China's development of a consciousness of heritage."

—**Tim Wright, Editor in Chief of the Oxford Bibliographies in Chinese Studies**

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